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India's latest political crisis has its roots in a personality clash between two unlikely partners who came together in a marriage of convenience destined to break up from day one.

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Five Saudi Arabian companies have agreed to recruit 5,000 skilled labourers from Bangladesh for construction and rehabilitation work in the war-ravaged Kuwait.

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Health



Children at play in unhygienic surroundings in a city slum. Is health for all by 2000 possible without chances for better conditions in and around slums?

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Business

Poverty among women and sex discrimination is rampant in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, according to a United Nations report.

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NEWS BRIEFS

US POWs head home

TEHRAN, Mar 9: Twenty-one US prisoners of war were headed home Saturday to embraces by their joyous families and a newly patriotic nation, reports AP.

Oil fire fighters in Kuwait

AHMADI(Kuwait), Mar 9: Oil fire fighters from US are in Kuwait to battle hundreds of oil well fires destroying 3 to 4 million barrels of crude a day, reports AFP.

18 Embassies in Kuwait reopen

NICOSIA, Mar 9: Kuwait said on Saturday 18 Embassies had reopened in its capital since the Gulf war ended last week. The Kuwaiti News Agency said its five fellow-members of the Gulf cooperation council — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates — had reopened missions, reports Reuters.

US fighters collide

RIYADH, Mar 9: Two US marine corps fighter planes collided in mid-air over Saudi Arabia, but both pilots ejected safely, US Central Command said, reports Reuters.

BNP, Awami League leaders call on Shahabuddin Procedures for formation of govt being discussed

By Staff Correspondent

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed is exchanging views on constitutional procedures with leaders of political parties including Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Awami League (AL) regarding the formation of a future government.

The Acting President is also seeking the opinions of constitutional experts of both parties to remove the stalemate in the formation of a council of ministers.

Constitutional experts, Justice T. H. Khan and Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar of the BNP called on the Acting President on Saturday morning.

The BNP leaders discussed

some legal and constitutional aspects regarding the formation of the future government.

Justice T. H. Khan when contacted said that they had discussed issues related to the transfer of power.

He said that there was no constitutional bar in transferring power to the majority party.

Justice T. H. Khan said that he drew the attention of the Acting President to the constitutional provisions regarding formation of a government.

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed however said that he would do whatever was necessary regarding the formation of the future government as per the constitu-

tional provisions.

Earlier Awami League president member and MP-elect Abdus Samad Azad called on the Acting President at the President's Secretariat.

The Awami League leader stressed the need for implementation of the joint declaration of the three alliances during the mass movement.

He hoped that the aspiration of the people as was laid down in the joint declaration would be reflected in the formation of the government.

Meanwhile, different organisations urged the Acting President to allow the majority party to form government in order to ensure transition

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AL bags three seats in repolling

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League won three out of four seats to parliament in repolling held on Saturday. National Democratic Party (NDP) candidate Salauddin Kader Chowdhury won the other seat.

With the addition of three more seats, the Awami League

seats total now stands at 88 as against 138 of BNP.

Repolling in 21 centres of Chandpur-1, Chittagong-6, Chittagong-12 and Jamalpur-2 constituencies was held peacefully on Saturday where the voting was suspended on

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EC asks for statements on poll expenses

The candidates who participated in the February 27 polls or their appointed polling agents have to submit statement of their election expenses to the concerned Returning Officers within 15 days from publication of their names in the official gazette, reports BSS.

According to an Election

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US Secretary of State James Baker shakes hands with Saudi Arabian King Fahd before a meeting at the Royal Palace Friday. —AFP photo

US warns Iraq not to use chemical weapons

Rebels seize Basra Radio

TAIF (Saudi Arabia), Mar 9: US Secretary of State James Baker confirmed here Saturday that the United States has warned Iraq not to use chemical weapons to put down rebellion in the country, reports agencies.

The warning, issued to the Iraqi government amid mounting domestic unrest following the country's defeat in the Gulf War, was made because we had reason to believe that they might be planning such activity, Baker said.

US diplomats accompanying Baker on his current Gulf tour said privately that the warning

had been conveyed by the US Ambassador to the United Nations, Thomas Pickering, to his Iraqi counterpart.

They said US intelligence had intercepted radio transmissions indicating that pro-government Iraqi troops had been given permission by the authorities in Baghdad to use chemical weapons if needed.

His statement coincided with a report in the New York Times on Saturday saying that the Iraqi government had authorised the use of chemical arms against the rebels but Washington quickly warned Baghdad against such a move.

Meanwhile, Iraqi insurgents have occupied the state radio in the southern port of Basra amid growing unrest against troops loyal to Saddam Hussein, an Iraqi opposition group said.

A spokesman for the Tehran-based Organisation of Islamic Action in Iraq said Iraqi technicians broke from army ranks and joined the "revolutionary forces" in Basra. The technicians seized the radio station, which had been damaged by Allied bombardments and repaired the installations.

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Speaker designates Acting Chief Justice to conduct oath

Star Report

The Acting Chief Justice is likely to administer oath to the newly elected members of parliament by Tuesday. Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury has designated the Acting Chief Justice to conduct the ceremony.

According to earlier indications, the oath taking was to be held today. But due delay in designating a person by the speaker and arrangements for sending letters to the Mps-elect it is not possible to administer oath today. A Parliament Secretariat source told the Daily Star that the oath will be administered by Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the official election results of four constituencies where repolling was held

on Saturday will be available by Monday.

When contacted, Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury said, he would be happy to see democracy taking firm roots in Bangladesh and he would not be an obstacle in nation's journey to democracy. He said he had taken necessary steps to hasten the swearing-in by the Mps-elect within the shortest possible time.

Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury has already written a letter to Acting Chief Justice Habibur Rahman to administer oath of office to the newly elected members of parliament on his behalf.

The receipt of the letter by the Acting Chief Justice could, however, not be confirmed.

The step has been taken in view of refusal by a member of Mps-elect to take oath from the Speaker of the Fourth Parliament.

Constitutionally the speaker continues to hold office until his successor has entered upon office. The speaker is, however, empowered to designate any person to administer oath.

Meanwhile, Mr. Chowdhury had a meeting with senior officials of the Parliament Secretariat and discussed necessary arrangements for the swearing-in ceremony.

He told the Daily Star that steps have been taken to provide accommodation to the Mps-elect in Dhaka during and

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Economic Task Forces Reports will now be submitted to Shahabuddin

Star Economic Report

Planning Adviser Prof Rehman Sobhan will present the reports of the economic task forces today to Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

The Planning Commission set up in early January 29 task forces, comprising about 250 professionals working in both public and private sectors.

The task forces examined the critical socio-economic issues and recommended several policy alternatives for economic management by the new political government.

The reports will later be made available to the newly elected members of the parliament, the Planning Commission sources said.

WB appraisal team due by month end

By Moazzem Hossain

A World Bank (WB) appraisal team will arrive in Dhaka in the last week of this month for its assessment of the overall economic situation and Bangladesh's aid requirements for 1991-92.

The team will prepare the Bank's report for the Paris-based Aid Group meeting, due to be held in late May. World Bank is the coordinator of the Aid Club chairs the annual aid pledge-making session of the donor countries and agencies.

The members of the team will be holding a series of meetings with the officials in Dhaka on the performance of the economy, aid utilisation and new requirements, devel-

opment priorities and future economic management policies.

Though a routine exercise on the eve of the consortium meeting, the visit by the appraisal team this year assumes a greater significance in view of the political developments in Bangladesh in the context of the parliamentary elections.

The Aid Club meeting is normally held every year in April. But this year, it is going to be held one month behind the normal schedule. The Bank and the interim government earlier agreed to reschedule this year's meeting to facilitate the induction of a political

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North Korea's Li Jung-Suk(L) and China's Wang Yonggang clinched the ladies' and men's singles titles of the eighth Pepsi Asian Cup table tennis tournament which concluded at the BKSP gymnasium, Savar yesterday. Story on Page 7. —Star photo

India prepares for May polls

NEW DELHI, Mar 9: A legislator close to ex-Prime Minister VP Singh defected to Rajiv Gandhi's rival Congress Party Saturday, as India prepared for elections in May.

Despite the boost to his party, Gandhi said he had asked the nation's president to call an early election, quashing fears that he might try to woo enough defectors to form a government without a vote.

President Ramaswamy Venkataraman was expected to announce his decision on elections next week, but Gandhi's statement to re-

porters after meeting the president appeared to remove all other options.

The elections would be the second for India in 18 months after two short-lived governments led by VP Singh and Chandra Shekhar, who abruptly resigned Wednesday after four months in office.

Parliament member Anil Shastri disclosed his switch from Singh's Janata Dal party and from his Parliament seat at a news conference called to launch the Congress party's election campaign.

second prime minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, but is considered to have little political influence. Nevertheless, the defection was a blow to Singh and fed suspicions that more legislators may cross over to Congress.

Gandhi, who was prime minister for five years, lost power in December 1989 elections and was replaced by Singh's Janata Dal-led National Front coalition. That government collapsed 11 months later.

Singh's party split when

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Democratic Kuwait, Emir assures James Baker

TAIF, Mar 9: Kuwait's ruling Emir pledged Saturday to democratise his war-ravaged country and to consider establishing post war relation with Israel, report agencies.

The Emir, who has been in exile at the Saudi summer capital here since Iraq's invasion of his country in August, also told US Secretary of State James A Baker III that he planned to return to Kuwait next week.

demands for a popularly elected legislature, the Emir, Jabir Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, said. "Absolutely, we agreed on it."

"According to the Constitution, we will walk that path," he said.

Al-Sabah also indicated a willingness to even look at eventually extending the right to vote to women.

The Sabah royal family has ruled the small country for two centuries. The Emir suspended Kuwait's popularly

elected national assembly in 1986.

The Emir also suggested that Kuwait would consider recognising Israel if United Nations resolutions on its dispute with Arab nations are implemented.

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US may write off \$1.3 b food debt

By Staff Correspondent

The US government is actively considering to write off an estimated 1.3 billion dollar food debt of Bangladesh. It was revealed from the full text of the transcript of proceedings of the US Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific on the just-concluded democratic exercise in Bangladesh.

The meeting was told that the US State Department viewed the February 27 parliamentary polls in Bangladesh as the freest and fairest ever held in the South Asian country in its 20-year history.

The relevant US authorities, considering genuine efforts for full growth of democracy were asked to consider the debt relief for the country in the field of PL-480 food assistance.

Full report on page 2

Country divided into 30 zones for women's seats

The Election Commission has divided the country into 30 zones specifying area of reserved seats for women in the Jatiya Sangsad under the Representation of People (Seats for women members) (Amendment) Order, 1973, reports BSS.

The areas of reserved seats are: Women Seat-1-Panchagar, Thakurgaon and Dinajpur districts; Seat-2-Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Rangpur districts; Seat-3-Kurigram and Gaibandha districts; Seat-4-Joypurhat and Bogra districts; Seat-5-Sirajganj and Pabna districts; Seat-6-Nawabganj and

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Over 300 women seek BNP tickets for 30 seats

By Staff Correspondent

More than 300 female aspirants are expected to seek BNP nominations for 30 seats reserved in parliament. Till last night a total of 315 nomination papers were sold from the Banani office of BNP.

The last date for submission of nomination papers has been extended to March 12. Among the prominent candidates of BNP are Begum Ahsanullah, Farida Hasan, Farida Rahman and Jahanara Begum.

BNP is likely to reach an understanding with Jamaat-Islami to capture the female seats.

In exchange, BNP will concede two seats to Jamaat.

When asked, BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar said there might be an understanding with Jamaat for election of the women's seats but he categorically said there would be no coalition with them regarding formation of government.

Khorshed Alam transferred to Finance Ministry

By Staff Correspondent

The government on Saturday issued transfer orders on 17 high officials of different ministries and departments.

According to an official handout, Principal Secretary at the President's Secretariat Khorshed Alam has been made Chief Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

Additional Secretary at the President's Secretariat M. Akhter Ali has been made Additional Secretary in charge of the same secretariat.

Officer on special duty (OSD) at the Establishment

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119 contesting 25 seats of DU Senate

Dhaka University teachers are locked in hectic campaign, as countdown began for registered graduates' election to the Senate on Tuesday, reports UNB.

The election of 25 representatives from the registered graduates to the university Senate is being held for the first time through direct ballots. Earlier, the election was held through postal ballot.

About 119 candidates from different professional bodies

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